5180

NARRATIVE REPORT

WILD BILL FIRE

FLAGSTAFF RANGER DISTRICT

COCONINO NATIONAL FOREST

REGION 3

Prepared by Angus M. Porter III, Date 3/12/74
Angus M. Porter, III, For. Tech.

Submitted by Roger E. Baker, Date 3/13/74
Roger E. Baker, District Ranger

Modified & approved by BSmk 3/12/74
(corrected)

LIBRARY COPY
ROCKY MTN. FOREST & RANGE
EXPERIMENT STATION

cc: RO
5/14/74 RB

NARRATIVE REPORT

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The last precipitation recorded prior to the Wild Bill Fire was .17 inch at Flagstaff on August 31, 1973 (36 days before the Wild Bill Fire). A total of 5.04 inches was recorded at Flagstaff for the period from April 1-August 31, 1973 with other areas receiving much less. For instance, East Pocket Lookout received only 1.19 inches for the period April 1-October 6, 1973.

Very strong, gusty winds prevailed over the fire area as a frontal system passed. This condition persisted approximately 36 hours.

The fire occurred in a high resistance to control and high rate of spread fuel area, fuel model C, slope class 2.

Fires occurring in the vicinity of the San Francisco Peaks are almost always affected by topographic conditions. Wind coming across ridges, peaks, saddles, and down canyons tends to have a Ventura effect on them, causing erratic fire behavior.

The fire started on the lower one-third of a southwest facing slope of approximately 40 percent.

The fire was discovered by a Coconino County Sheriff's Deputy, who radioed his dispatcher, who contacted the Forest Dispatcher. Standards, as they are known now, were met. There is no night time detection by Forest Service personnel on the Coconino. The detection system now being practiced is not adequate to meet the thirty-minute discovery time standards 24 hours a day.

Communications from the Sheriff's Deputy to the Forest Dispatcher were in accordance with standards, however, if a deputy had not happened to be in this area at this time, this would have been impossible.

The Dispatcher obtained all necessary information from the detector for dispatching action.

The Dispatcher may not have correlated detector information with danger rating, fuel types, topography, and hour control requirements to justify the degree of initial attack strength. A fifty-gallon ground tanker was dispatched as initial attack. A Model 70 tanker was available, but not used. The fireman operating the fifty-gallon tanker was not able to locate the fire until it had reached one or two acres in size. At this point, the fire would possibly have escaped the Model 70 tanker and crew as well.

For weather on day of discovery, see Arizona fire weather forecast attached. The predicted and adjusted fire danger rating was class 3 (high), the actual danger was also class 3. The forecast and actual fire danger for subsequent days was class 3.

Statistical and graphic records are as follows:

Man-Caused Fires, 1973	Lightning Fires, 1973
50 (A)	61 (A)
9 (B)	5 (B)
1 (G)	—
60	66

The Wild Bill Fire was the only fire with an extra burning period.

Total area burned by man-caused fires was 7,183 acres.

Total area burned by lightning fires was 40 acres.

Total 7,223 acres

Fire occurrence by day of the week:

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Man-caused	19	6	4	5	10	1	15
Lightning	15	11	8	11	8	6	7
Total	34	17	12	16	18	7	22

The fire occurred in fuel model C. It burned 6,832 acres of second-growth timber (damage class 3), 80 acres of range meadow and 228 acres of pinyon-juniper (damage class 1). It started in a 30-minute hour control zone. Transportation to the fire was good, however, it started approximately 35 miles from Flagstaff. The tanker crew normally stationed at Kendrick Park was not in position. It was not feasible to keep the crew at Kendrick Park at that time of year as there is no heat or provisions to keep water from freezing. Communications any where on the north side of the San Francisco Peaks, where this fire occurred, are poor at best. All radio traffic must be relayed through Kendrick or O'Leary Lookouts.

2. PREVENTION ACTION

It is presumed that the fire started from a camp fire that was improperly extinguished. Perhaps the people responsible were ignorant to the proper method of extinguishing their fire or perhaps they just didn't give a damn.

Smoking and campfire restrictions were not in effect on the Coconino. The fire danger class was 3. Under our present prevention plan, smoking and

camp fire restrictions be imposed in this class. Possibly this would have prevented this fire. The area prevention should be adequate, obviously, it was not in this case. The prevention patrolman did not make any contacts in the Walker Lake area. He did, however, make approximately 90 contacts over the weekend in the general area. This indicates that fire prevention technicians must have specific primary roads and/or points of interest designated to check at scheduled intervals. The Walker Lake area is a very popular spot on a poor road. Fire prevention technicians have a tendency to travel on highly used roads. They also may set up a pattern of patroling and unconsciously neglect a high use area such as Walker Lake.

The prevention plan is revised currently. Changes to make the prevention plan more effective are:

A. As stated above, more direct instructions to fire prevention technicians as to what, when and where to patrol are needed.

B. The Forest Service is reluctant to impose smoking and camp fire restrictions due to public opinion. We must educate the public and some of our own people. Smoking and camp fire restrictions and complete closures are commonly confused. The restrictions are a very effective tool when used properly and undoubtedly should have been in effect before the Wild Bill Fire, particularly since turkey season was on. Complete closures should be used only as a last resort.

The investigation action was not as prompt and thorough as it should have been. The only people who could have shown Eddie Walters where the fire might have started were engaged in critical suppression action. Ki Porter was Fire Boss, Jim Bedlion was Line Boss, and Tim Bos was manning the only large ground tanker on the fire. The investigator should have been able to find the point of origin on this fire with little effort. Instead, he spent much time waiting around the fire camp for someone to take him to a spot he should have been able to find himself with little effort on his part.

The cause of the fire was established as an escaped camp fire.

3. FIRST PHASE -- INITIAL ATTACK

A. The behavior of the fire was not adequately described or anticipated. At the time of discovery and for several hours later, light to moderate winds were blowing in Flagstaff, while at the fire itself, winds were very strong and erratic.

B. Report and travel time are not adequate. They will not improve unless some system is devised for night time detection and reporting.

C. Initial attack forces were inadequate considering the weather and values involved.

D. Initial attack forces were dispatched from nearest available sources.

E. Initial attack forces were well trained.

F. The equipment dispatched was not the kind and quantity needed, however, hind sight is always 20-20. As stated earlier, the fire was reported as small. It was night and the wind was not blowing in Flagstaff. Initial attack had communications, but they were very poor due to the location of the fire.

G. It is difficult to specify why the initial attack failed. There was not equipment failure. There was human failure, an employee could not locate the fire. It was only visible from one spot on U. S. Highway 180 (approximately 1.5 miles from the fire). There was no moon. Approximately forty minutes of very valuable time was consumed trying to locate the fire. When it was located, it was out of hand and could not be controlled by one man. At the time the unit was sent with one man, another crew was being recruited to back him up. People were extremely difficult to locate this particular night. The Joy Fire had been reported at approximately 1600 and also had potential of being a large, problem fire. Fire overhead and the Flagstaff Hotshot crew were committed to this fire. Back up crews were ordered at approximately 1600, October 6, 1973.

H. Possibly the fire could have been controlled if it had been attacked when only a few chains, but perhaps not then, considering the long distance spotting that was occurring.

4. SECOND PHASE

A. A Regional fire boss was functioning at 1800 on October 7, 1973 (approximately 17 hours after first attack). The first shift overhead was made up from the forest overhead team.

B. The Dispatcher anticipated the needs of the fire boss.

C. The fire boss sized up the situation adequately.

(1) His plans adequately reflected the effects of weather, topography, fuels, accessibility, and quality and number of overhead and firefighters available, as well as types and quantities of equipment.

(2) At 1800 hours, the plans chief declared an estimated size for 1000 hours the following day.

(3) An estimate was made by the plans chief of the manpower and equipment necessary to control the fire by 1000 the next day. No record was made of this.

(4) Good scouting information was brought into plans and plans for suppression were based on this scouting.

(5) The fire boss set up a sound, efficient, and well balanced organization to control the fire. It was done promptly. The Regional fire boss did, however, take over only partial command upon his arrival. He held crews and equipment in fire camp that had been ordered by the first shift fire boss, who was still acting and was expecting the incoming crews to be placed at his disposal.

(6) The Mobile weather forecaster was not effective; his forecasts were not reliable. Better forecasts were received from the local weather bureau and local radio stations.

(7) Fire camp was established when the Regional fire boss took over the fire. It was adequate.

(8) Operations were timed adequately. There was quite a lot of confusion when the first night shift went on the line. The Regional team did not communicate with overhead on the fire, if they had, there would not have been this confusion. The transportation routes chosen were in some cases too hot and smokey to drive through and in some cases better and shorter routes were available.

(9) His final accomplishments were satisfactory, however, much mop-up work was left to the District. The fire received approximately one inch of snow at which time there was approximately 1.5 miles of line still not completed on the north end of the fire. The fire team was reluctant to work with the District to put crews and equipment on the line. It seemed they just wanted to tie up any loose ends they had and get home.

(10) The fire boss adequately applied safety measures. The fire had an outstanding safety record. See attached safety record.

(11) The fire boss adequately considered firefighting costs and values.

(12) No cooperating agencies were involved in suppression action.

D. The Dispatcher furnished overhead, equipment, manpower, and facilitating gear requested by the fire boss within the time limits.

E. The man selected to serve as fire boss proved competent and fully capable of redeeming his responsibilities.

F. No major mistakes in judgment were made by the fire boss.

G. The fire was simply uncontrollable the first two burning periods due to erratic fire behavior.

5. THIRD PHASE -- MAJOR CONTROL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS

A. Calculations of probable behavior and location of fire at successive time intervals were not documented.

B. Calculation of needs for firefighting based on the above estimates was not documented.

C. Organization and distribution of overhead, manpower, and equipment at successive time intervals by sectors, divisions, etc. were documented in maps and records.

D. Mobilization of forces was sufficient as to strength, timing, supervisory personnel, and equipment.

E. Most scouting was done primarily by District personnel. It was completely adequate and efficient.

F. Fire camp location was good; close to a main road, close to fire line.

G. This item is partially documented in the fire team's narrative.

H. The plan of attack failed two burning periods due to the erratic winds and fire behavior.

I. Labor effectiveness was fair. Morning crews reached the line shortly after daylight. Night crews generally reached the fire line before dark after the second night shift went on duty. All crews were adequately supervised and directed. In some cases, the 16-hour shift limitation was exceeded, particularly on the first shift.

J. The effectiveness of specialized equipment was generally good. Only one cat was separated from his cat boss. This occurred in the early stage of the fire. Two cats were assigned to one cat boss and they became separated while chasing slopovers.

K. Mop-up and patrol operations were very adequate. Demobilization was outstanding considering the fire went from 17 crews to two crews in one shift.

L. Safety measures were adequately applied. See safety resume attached.

6. LINE OFFICER PARTICIPATION

A. The District Ranger or his representative was available for consultation.

B. He did assist the fire boss in some decisions, however, he was not used to his full capacity in making resource decisions.

C. He visited camp and lines.

D. He did not tie up communications with non-fire business.

E. He was interested in personnel problems.

F. He attended overhead meetings.

G. He talked to private landowners adjacent to the fire. His representative talked to AT&T concerning protection of their buried communications cable.

7. PERFORMANCE OF OVERHEAD

A. Overhead was qualified for assignments, however, there is a tendency to leave highly qualified people on cold lines "just because they were there yesterday" when people not so qualified are trying to hold hot lines. Top notch division and sector bosses may be driving a truck when borderline division and sector bosses are on the line. This problem exists in all the fire functions, not just on the line.

B. Most of the overhead was rated before release.

C. Teams were kept intact.

D. Training has been accomplished. Execution in some functions needs strengthening.

E. Im my opinion, communications were not used efficiently. Fifteen miles of phone line was strung from the outskirts of Flagstaff to fire camp at an exhorbitant cost to the government. Two or three more mobile phones would have sufficed just as well or better.

F. No personnel deficiencies were recorded.

G. The Regional team functioned well. Past experience and training are paying off.

H. Crew bosses stayed with crews during off-shift periods.

I. Overhead did not control specific vehicles for personal use.

8. EFFECT OF SUPPRESSION ACTION ON ENVIRONMENT

A. A resource advisor was designated and available for consultation on all aspects of environmental impacts of suppression operations. Many of his suggestions agreed to by the fire boss did not get down to the ground.

B. The effects of suppression on soils, vegetation, wildlife habitat, and watershed were considered.

C. Possible environmental damages were discussed at strategy meetings.

D. In some cases, fire lines were not constructed of reasonable width in locations that would cause minimum erosion. In one case, a six-blade wide cat line was constructed in the pinyon-juniper.

E. Snags were not felled into streams.

F. Camps, heliports, helispots and other facilities were located where they would have the least effect on the environment.

G. Heavy equipment was used largely and did it's usual thing. Some fire lines were put in with little discretion. Waterbarring and reseeding of the fire lines were prompt, however, reseeding of other steep, hard-burned areas was delayed six weeks due to problems in getting supplemental funding.

H. Tractors were not restricted enough.

I. Dust areas were partially controlled with road oil.

FIRE WEATHER FORECAST FOR ARIZONA 14 45 MST SAT OCT 6 1973

SYNOPSIS... UPPER LOW PRESSURE TROUGH IS DEEPENING ALONG THE WEST COAST. SOUTHERLY WINDS CONTINUE A MODERATELY MOIST FLOW OVER ARIZONA. FEW SHOWERS OR THUNDERSHOWERS THIS EVENING AND SUNDAY WITH POSSIBLE INCREASE IN SHOWER ACTIVITY MONDAY AS COOLER AIR MOVES INTO NORTHERN SECTIONS OF THE STATE.

TONIGHT... FEW SHOWERS OR THUNDERSHOWERS THIS EVENING OTHERWISE PARTLY CLOUDY. LITTLE CHANGE IN TEMP OR RH. DIMINISHING WINDS THIS EVENING BECOMING MOSTLY SOUTHERLY 5 TO 15 MPH AFTER 2100 MST.

SUNDAY... INCREASING CUMULUS CLOUDS WITH A FEW SHOWERS OR THUNDERSHOWERS DURING AFTERNOON OR EVENING HOURS. TEMPS DOWN 2 TO 6 WITH RH UP ABOUT 5 PCNT. SOUTH TO SOUTHWEST WINDS 15 TO 30 MPH WITH SOME HIGHER GUSTS OVER PEAKS AND RIDGES.

	MAX TEMP	MIN RH
7000 FEET	65 DEGS	35 PCNT
5000 "	73	30
3000	82	23

MONDAY... SCATTERED AFTERNOON AND EVENING SHOWERS NORTH AND A FEW SOUTHEAST PORTION. SLIGHTLY COOLER NORTH WITH LITTLE CHANGE SOUTH PORTION. INCREASING HUMIDITY. WINDY AGAIN MONDAY.

FW PHOENIX

ZONE FORECASTS

	WEA	TEMP	RH	WIND	PI	P2	LTNG
KAIBAB	2	DN5	UP5	0	0	0	10
COCONINO	2	DN5	UP5	0	0	0	10
PRESCOTT	2	DN5	UP5	0	0	0	10
SITGREAVES	2	DN5	UP5	0	0	0	10
APACHE	2	0	UP5	0	0	0	10
TONTO	2	0	UP5	0	0	0	10
CORONADO	2	0	UP5	0	0	0	10
SAN CARLOS AND FT APACHE RES	2	0	UP5	0	0	0	10

KISTLER FIRE WEATHER PHOENIX

	10-7	10-8	10-9	10-10	10-11	10-12
Number of firefighters on line duty	630	734	692	40	40	40
Number of overhead on line duty	52	64	58	5	4	4
Number of camp and facilitating personnel on duty	60	140	160	10	0	0
[illegible] line unit	11 Dozers 5 Ground Tankers 2 Airplanes 8 Air Tankers	14 Dozers 12 Ground Tankers 2 Airplanes 8 Air Tankers 2 Med. Helicopters	14 Dozers 12 Ground Tankers 2 Med. Helicopters	2 Dozers 2 Med. Helicopters	2 Dozers 2 Med. Helicopters	2 Dozers
[illegible] Support [illegible]	59	37	0	0	0	0
Gallonage	90,210	56,580	0	0	0	0

WILD BILL FIRE

Coconino N.F.

On Oc[illegible] 7th I was disp[illegible]ed to the Wild Bill Fire on the Coconino N.F. and ar[illegible] at Fire Camp [illegible]700. Plans Chief Andy Ellis informed me that Hugh Th[illegible]n had been as[illegible]ed as Safety Officer on the night shift and I was t[illegible] as Safety Of[illegible]r on the day shift. The fire was controlled at 1800 [illegible]ctober 8 and t[illegible] camp had been built up to 800 men. Although some sa[illegible] violations were [illegible]ted, the line overhead exhibited a good safety a[illegible]ude and even tho[illegible] the buildup was fast,only one serious type inju[illegible]nd been reporte[illegible]ntil my release at 1400 on October 10. Because of [illegible] swiftness of [illegible] buildup and demobolization, I was unable to get information on several [illegible]f the medical cases from the Flagstaff Hospital. A resume of the accidents is as follows:

1. Cut chin - One memb[illegible]f the organized crews received a cut on the chin which re[illegible] fourteen stiches. This occurred as the crew was grouped a[illegible] the roadside awaiting pickup from the night shift of October 7. The injured employee was lying on the ground and another crew member dropped a pulaski which slid downslope and struck the employee on the chin. From what I could find out the employees were grouped on the slope by the road with their tools. This situation contributed to the accident. This was the only crew I found without an assigned C.L.O. I mentioned this to the Plans Chief and it was corrected for the next shift. All other crews with assigned C.L.O.'s were noted waiting in a safe orderly fashion.

2. Injured right eye - The employee felt a pain in the eye while building fireline. Examination at the first aid station revealed the eyeball had been punctured or scratched. The employee was sent to the doctor, treated and returned to camp. No one was sure exactly what took place but employee was either working too close on in or too much of a hurry to keep aware of his surroundings. Goggles or safety glasses could have prevented this occurrence.

3. Smoke Inhalation - Employee returned from line after becoming ill during line construction. The first aid people thought he had swallowed too much smoke and sent him to the doctor. Because of the strong swirling winds, smoke was forced along the ground making the exposure more pronounced than in normal fire situations. The swirling winds tended to prolong the period of exposure. Why this man was affected more than the rest of the crew, I do not know. Possibly his tolerance level is below that of the rest of the crew or else he did nothing to minimize the effect of the smoke.

4. Sprained foot - Employee complained of his foot hurting. The first aid people thought that he had fractured a small bone in the foot. Doctors examination proved it to be just a sprain. This accident was questionable as several crew members said he had complained about "arthritis" pains in bones and feet enroute to the fire. It is possible that the foot had been previously sprained and merely reinjured.

5. Colds - Two men were sent to doctors for treatment for colds - under the circumstances, this was quite remarkable. Had the fire lasted much longer the number of cases would have been greater as the medics treated 35 to 40 for colds the last morning of the fire.

6. Rash - This CA-1 was made as the medics were unsure as to whether it was a poison ivy rash or not. No further treatment was authorized at fire.

7. Collapse - During the first evening one casual said he was sick and was taken by pickup to Flagstaff. Enroute he collapsed and was sent to Flagstaff Hospital. I did not receive a report as to what caused this collapse. It may not have been attributable to the fire.

SUMMARY: Although the buildup was swift, the safety attitude was generally good. Support was received at all levels in correcting any deficiencies found. The presence of the Flagstaff Fire Department First Aid station greatly reduced the number of incidents that would have been reported on CA1's. They treated 250 + persons - mostly for eye irritations from smoke, colds or minor scratches and cuts. Their aid was of a high caliber and should be commended.

Robert F. Lyle
District Ranger

RFL/cg

NARRATIVE STATEMENT

Wild Bill Fire

At 2355 on October 6, 1973, the Coconino County Sheriff's Office reported a small fire southeast of Kendrick Park. This location is approximately 25 miles north of Flagstaff on U.S. Highway 180 (legal description T21N, R6E, Section 11, center of NW¼). The main District fire force is located in Flagstaff.

Immediately upon receiving the report of the fire, a 50-gallon ground tanker was dispatched. First attack was made at 0130 by the 50-gallon tanker. At this time, it was reported that the fire was five acres in high grass and "doghair" and "crowning". Wind speed was in excess of 30 MPH with gusts to 50 MPH. Additional forces were immediately dispatched. These included a Model 70 tanker, JD-350 tractor, and the Assistant District FCO. These additional forces arrived at the scene at approximately 0230. Backfiring attempts began at this time. The first attempt to backfire was made along the road that encircles Walker Lake to the north. The second attempt was made along Forest Road 514, approximately one-half mile north of the first attempt. Both attempts proved futile. Long distance spotting occurred due to extreme winds and extremely dry fuels (both heavy and light).

Dozers and manpower began arriving between 0500 and 0700. They were dispatched to the line from a staging area set up on Forest Road 151 which later became fire camp. This proved to be a better than average fire camp location. Three crews and six cats began a flanking action from the approximate point of origin near Walker Lake. Two other crews attempted burning out Forest Road 523 near the head of the fire. Due to the extreme winds and fire intensity, the effect of aerial retardants is questionable. Because of insufficient manpower, much line was lost in the first shift. Cats were building line, but the fire continued to spot over it and the cats had to back up to pick up spot fires.

The Regional overhead team was ordered at approximately 0400. The team took charge of the fire on the shift change at approximately 1800, October 7, 1973. At this time, all available crews were put on the line and the suppression action began paying off. The fire was controlled at 1800 on the 8th of October, approximately 24 hours after the Regional team took charge of the fire.

The main single reason the fire became Class G size is very hard to determine. The winds carried fire brands into slash piles and the slash piles ignited, causing intense heat and more spotting. Some spotting came from crowns torching out, however, most of the spotting went from slash pile to slash pile. The fire would not have been so troublesome if one of these factors had not existed - slash or wind.

ANGUS M. PORTER, III
Forestry Technician

Angus M Porter

Narrati - Wild Bill Fire

Day Shift 10/7/73

e fire started approximately midnight October 6. By 0900 fire was ap-
oximately 300 acres and two and one-half miles long. Twenty crew or-
ced and twelve cats.

nds from SW were gusting to 45 MPH during the day. Fire continued to
ot and cross lines. Backfiring was started in the morning from Forest
ad 550. This line at Road 550 was lost.

ckfiring was also done from Roads 523 and 514, as well as from cat lines.
e line on 523 was lost. A portion of backfiring along 514 held, but spot-
ng occurred over the line in Sections 10 and 30 on the east side of this
ad. A total of ten air tankers were used on the fire. Ki Porter was
re Boss for this shift with a line organization between east and west
ines. Buddy Caylor was on the west line and Jim Bedlion on the east line.

ne Regional fire team had been called for early in the day and took over
ne fire at the beginning of the night shift.

Night Shift 10/7/73

he Regional fire team took over the fire at the beginning of this shift.

eat r forecast was for south to southwest winds 15 to 25 MPH with gusts
5 MPH during evening, dropping to southerly 5 to 15 MPH after 8:00 PM.

A total of ten crews, twelve cats, and ten pumpers were used on the fire
during this shift on a three-division fire.

At 2200 hours the fire size was calculated as 5,043 acres. Spotting across
lines was common on all sectors.

Saddle Mountain visible from U.S. Highway 180 was burning on the top of the
mountain.

At the end of the shift, 1,120 chains had been constructed,400 chains left
to build.

East side of line looked good at the end of shift.

Fire is burning north toward P-J woodland, but woodland is described as
a heavy stand with joining crowns. Fire has crossed underground telephone
line.

Day . 10/8/73

ire was bur[illegible]on top of Saddl[illegible]ntain visible from U.S. Highway 180. econdary li[illegible] below hill to [illegible]ost. Possible control action was burn off [illegible] side of Saddl[illegible]ain. Ranger Roger Baker advised gainst this. [illegible]her alternative [illegible]o build line against burn. This rocedure was [illegible]er followed.

arly fire weather forecast had [illegible]icted a cold fron with shifting winds rom SW to w[illegible]o NW due to fron[illegible]ving through. This did not materialize.

ost of line w[illegible] tied in during th[illegible] shift. There is still some line to be ied in NW co[illegible] at Division III an[illegible]hot spots needing work in Division IV outh of Road 523.

lurry drops were shut off early in the day due to high erratic winds.

orrego Trick Tank was damaged tod[illegible]t an estimated cost of $1,000 damage.

ome damage also occurred to private land due to fire line construction nd burned acreage. This is estimated at $1,000 damage.

hirteen cats and nineteen pumpers worked the fire today along with crews.

10/9/73 RAIN?

Beg[illegible]ing late on the preceding afternoon, moisture began to fall over the fire. It reached a significant intensity about midnight and turned from showers to snow between midnight and 0300.

The showers thoroughly soaked crews on the line and caused some concern on demobilization because of low temperatures. Tarps and plastic tarps were ordered and received about 2300 on 10/8/73.

Plans were tentatively made for light patrol and mop-up for a day shift on 10/9/73; however, when the fire boss arose and took stock of the snow and weather conditions, crews planned for the line were not sent out.

Breakfast feeding of the crews was delayed a couple of hours to avoid getting the men up in the cold weather with no assignments for them.

The resource rehabilitation team stopped by the plans section to pick up maps and see about obtaining a helicopter for use in planning and effecting rehabilitation of the burn.

Demobiliation was in full swing and 90-95 percent of the fire personnel was in release status by 1100. Two cats were left on the fire with Ki Porter in charge for drainage of firelines and repair of road damage.

Above narative taken from fire camp personnel reports.

Wild Fire
10-7
Flagstaff Ranger District
Coconino National Forest
Flagstaff, Arizona

NOV 12 1973
FOREST SERVICE
Coconino National Forest
FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

October 12, 1973

Investigator's Report

On October 7, 1973, at 6:00 a.m., I received a telephone call from Western Fire Dispatcher, Morena, Arizona, that I was needed on the Coconino National Forest to investigate several fires. I arrived at the Supervisor's Office in Flagstaff and the Forest Dispatcher directed me to the Fire Camp of the Wild Bill Fire. I arrived at the fire camp about 9:00 a.m., and conferred with Bill Buck, who stated that they did not have time to show me the location where the fire occurred, but that I could go investigate the Ski and Spur Fire, where a bunk house had burned early that morning. I then went immediately and made an investigation of this fire and returned to the Wild Bill Fire Camp about 2:00 p.m., and attempted to locate someone to take me to the origin of the fire, but was told that the fire boss, Ki Porter was on the fire line somewhere and would be back shortly.

I then talked with Ernie McCrary and advised him that I needed someone to take me to the origin of the fire and he attempted to locate someone, but could not find anyone who knew the origin, so he stated that the fire boss should be back shortly. After it started getting dark, I left the camp and attempted to locate the Hot Shot Crew that were camped at the Ski & Spur.

On Monday, October 8, at 8:00 a.m., I returned to the Wild Bill Fire Camp, but no one from the District was present to show me the origin of the fire, so I located Levi Packard, Supervisor of the Arizona Game and Fish Department in Flagstaff and he and I went to the Walker Lake area and attempted to locate the origin of the fire. We were able to obtain some evidence of a camp site at the Walker Lake area, but this later proved to be some distance from the origin of the fire. I then returned to the Fire Camp and around 2:00 p.m., I located Jimmy Bedlion, who stated that he was one of the first employees on the fire, so I asked him to show me the location of the fire when he first observed it around 1:30 a.m., on October 7, 1973. He and I went in, but could not locate any evidence, as by this time, the tractors had been working in the area.

I then returned to the fire camp and was told that a Jess Swanson had some evidence. I then attempted to locate Jess Swenson. I located his wife, who stated that her husband and son were riding in the vicinity of Walker Lake on Saturday, October 6, 1973 and probably observed the person or persons responsible for the fire. She told me her husband worked for the college and I could locate him there. I asked her if she had a phone and she said that she did not. I then

FLAG
ACTI
INFO
3-
3-
3-
3-
3-
3-
TMA
CLK
CLK
AI

went to [illegible]niversity and at[illegible]d to locate Jess Swanson. After waiting [illegible] until 5:00 p.[illegible] left the University and went back to the [illegible] Spur camp to [illegible] to locate the Hot Shot crew. I then ret[illegible] to Phoenix th[illegible]t as I had a hearing in court the next morni[illegible].

On Tuesday, [illegible]tober 9, 1973, I [illegible]urned to the Wild Bill Fire Camp and was told [illegible] Jess Swanson had [illegible] by the camp on Monday evening and wanted to [illegible] someone where he [illegible] observed some turkey hunters on Saturday. [illegible] asked to see if an[illegible] went with Swanson to locate this area and was told that no one w[illegible]ith him.

I then went to Mr. Swanson's house and he told me that he and his son were riding on Saturday, October 6, 1973, in the vicinity of Walker Lake and that on returning to his ranch, they rode by three white males in their early thirties camped on a dim road located between Walker Lake and the Hart Prairie Road. He stated that he asked them if they had seen any turkeys and they said that they did not. He also stated that the three were working on a rifle on the tailgate of the tan Ford pickup truck and that one of them appeared to be very intoxicated. Mr. Swanson stated that they had a cot set up, but he did not see a camp fire. He said one had long hair and a heavy beard and mustache, which was brown [illegible]n color. He also said that the truck did not have a camper on it and that it was not a new truck. He stated that the men were of average weight and height. I asked him if he could remember anything else about the vehicle or men and he said he could not.

Mr. Swanson stated that he went to the fire camp on Monday afternoon to get someone to go to the location that he had seen the three men, but the people at the fire camp told him that there was an investigator working on the case and that they did not need to go with him. He said that they did not seem to be interested in finding out who started the fire. I asked him if he knew who he talked with and he said a man by the name of Ernesto Felix.

Mr. Swanson and I went in to the location that he had seen the three men and we located the area where they had camped, but it was destroyed by the tractor plowing the fire line. However, I was able to find some broken beer bottles. I made a thorough search of the area, but could not find any evidence other than the broken beer bottles, which had been burned in the fire.

I interviewed Larry Phillips, the Fire Prevention Patrolman who was working the Hart Prairie Road on Saturday, October 6, 1973. I asked him if he went into Walker Lake and he said he did not. I asked him if he issued any notices to people along the Prairie Road and he checked and found that he issued two. One was issued to Ernest Kurmes, 36 E. David Street, Flagstaff and the other was issued to Walter Sip and Charles J. Hazranek, 4425 Marion Way, Phoenix, Arizona.

I interviewed Ernest Kurmes and he stated that he and his family went to Walker Lake on Saturday, but he could only remember seeing a white Chevrolet Camper parked near the lake and that he saw two men in a duck blind on the lake.

I interviewed Charles J. Hazranek, Phoenix, Arizona and he said that he and Walter Sipe went to Walker Lake on Friday with their girl friends and camped out on the lake. He said as he was entering the lake area, he observed a Ford truck, year model '63 to '67, with no camper. He said the color was a very light blue and had oxidized until it looked tan. He also said they had a very large fire and one was in a sleeping bag and that when they passed by, he hollered at them. He said he appeared to be drunk. He said he had brown hair and a two or three day old beard. He also stated that he estimated his age as being in the middle thirties. He said there was another person, but he did not remember much about him, except that he did not have a beard and was in the same age group. Charles said that the other person had bushy hair, which was brown in color and did not go below his collar. He also stated that the next morning as he was leaving, he did not see the vehicle or the two men, but he did hear some gun shot in the vicinity of where they were camped.

I have passed this information on to the Flagstaff Police Department, Arizona Highway Patrol, Coconino Sheriff's Office and the Arizona Game and Fish Department, to be on the lookout for a vehicle matching the description of an old model Ford or Chevrolet ½ ton pickup, colored either tan, light brown or light blue, that may have been in the area hunting on the weekend of October 6, 1973.

JOHN E. WALTERS
Criminal Investigator

"EXTRA PERIOD"

USDA - FOREST SERVICE

INDIVIDUAL FIRE REPORT

FIRE NAME: WILD BILL

MANDATORY ITEMS: CLASS A 1-33 | CLASS B 1-34 | CLASS C to G 1-44

RANGER FIRE NO.: 118

REGION FIRE NO.:

1. State [2-3]	2. County	3. Forest [4-5]	4. District [6-7]	5. Supervisor No. [8-10]
Arizona 04	Coconino	Coconino 04	Flagstaff 03	434

6. Fire started on [11]	7. Month [12]	Day [13-14]	Year [15]	8. Watershed No. [16-23]	9. Size Class [24]
FFL 1	October 0	07	3	14100660	G

10. Statistical Cause [25]	11. General Cause [26]	12. Specific Cause [27-28]	13. Class of people [29]
Campfire 4	Hunting 6	Warning Fire 09	Visitor 9

	DATE Mo. Day	HOUR	ELAPSED TIME Hours [30-31]	Min. [32-33] [34-35]
14. Origin	10/6	1960	19	
15. Discovered (Item 15 minus 14)	10/6	2355	4	55
16. First attack (Item 16 minus 15)	10/7	0055	1	[36-37] [38-39] --
17. First Reinforcement (Item 17 minus 16)	10/7	0120	[40] --	[41-42] 25
18. Fire Controlled Item 18 minus 16	10/8	1600	[43-45] 41	
19. Fire Out	11/5	1700		

27. Slope: 40%	[59] 4
28. Aspect: Southwest	[60] 6
29. Elevation: 8,100	[61] 8
30. Cover type - vicinity of origin: PP	[62-63] 60
31. Fuel type - vicinity of origin: 181	[64-69] 33
32. Cost Class: $340,790	[70] 6

20. Discovered by (Class) | Location: Others(Sheriff)0 U.S.Hiway 180 [46] 0

21. First Attack by | (Kind) | (Amount): Ground Tanker 3 1 [47-48] 31

22. First Reinforcements (Kind) | (Amount): Dozer 1 1 [49-50] 11

Maximum No. Personnel [51-54] 732

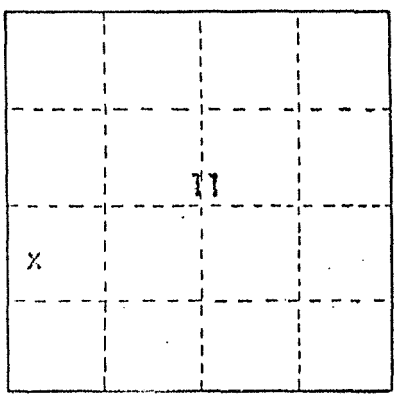
24. Value Class at Origin [55] 2

25. Fire danger [56-57] 03

26. Special Weather feature: NE Gusty to 50 MPH [58] 9

33. Location

Scale: 2 inches = 1 mile



Location description

a. Township	[71-74] 23 N
b. Range	[75-78] 6 E
c. Section	[79-80] 11
d. Meridian: Gila & Salt R.	

Alternate description for lands not covered by GLO survey

e. Latitude	[72-75] 3624
f. Longitude	[76-80] 11143

34. Acres burned	NATIONAL FOREST LANDS	OTHER LANDS INSIDE
a. Noncommercial forest	[11-16]	[17-21]
b. Commercial forest (1) Natural	[22-27] 6032	[28-32]
(2) Plantation	[33-37]	[38-42]
c. Nonforest	[43-48] 200	[49-53] 10
35. Volume of timber destroyed (MBM)	[54-59] 1500	[60-64]

36. Total acres when controlled	[65-70] 7140
37. Fuel type prevailing on burned area: 181	[71-76] 33
38. Topography (vicinity of origin)	[77] 7
39. Highest Fire Danger	[78-79] 04
40. Critical Weather Feature: NE Gusty to 50 MPH	[80] 9

Remarks (Continue on reverse if required)

Narrative Statements & Investigation Report attached.

Submitted (Signature): Ralph E Baker — Date:

Approved (Signature): [illegible] — (Acting) Forest — Date: 11/25/-

Value of Resources Damaged or Destroyed (Code in hundreds of dollars)	N.F. LANDS		OTHER LANDS (2) INSIDE FS PROTECTION	
	Dollars	Code	Dollars	Code
41. Timber	6,832,000	[11-15] 66320		[16-20] _____
42. Other (non-timber)				
a. Watershed		[21-25] _____		[26-29] ____
b. Recreation		[30-34] _____		[35-38] ____
c. Range & Wildlife				
d. Improvements	2,850			
e. Other non-timber	92,000			
f. Total non-timber (a to e incl.)	94,850	[39-43] _____		[44-48] _____
43. GRAND TOTAL (Items 41 and 42f)	6,926,850			
44. Acres burned by Value Class	Value Class		Acres	Acres
	[49] 6		[50-54] 7140	[55-59] _____
	[60] _		[61-65] _____	[66-70] _____
	[71] _		[72-75] ____	[76-79] ____

Item 41 Breakdown: Category #32 Second Growth PP, 6,832 Acres @ 1,000/Acre = 6,832,000

Item 42d Breakdown:	Damaged Trick Tank	= 1,600
	Range Fence, 1/2 Mile @ 500/Mi	= 250
	One Cattleguard	= 1,000
	Total Improvements	= 2,850

Item 42e Breakdown:	Category #43 Range Meadow, 80 Acres @ 250/Acre	= 20,000
	Category #44 Pinyon-Juniper, 228 Acres @250/Acre	= 72,000
	Total Other Non-timber	92,000